



FIRST THINGS FIRST CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVE

In November of 2006, Arizonians, by a majority vote, created an 80 cents cigarette sales tax to provide dedicated and sustainable funding for early childhood services; thus making a commitment to all Arizona children age 5 and younger that they will have the necessary tools to arrive at school healthy and ready to succeed. The initiative created the First Things First (FTF) board and 31 regional partnership councils that share the responsibility of ensuring that these early childhood funds are spent on strategies that result in improved education and health outcomes for Arizona's youngest constituents.

A critical variable that is potentially threatening FTF's strategic progress is the disparity among Arizona nonprofits in terms of their abilities to access FTF grant awards and/or meet contractual requirements once an award is received. To address this challenge, FTF in late August 2012 awarded the Alliance of Arizona Nonprofits a 10 month statewide capacity building planning grant to conduct research and develop an implementation plan (Phase 1) to:

- Identify various internal and external factors that impede agencies providing services to families with children birth to 5 from successfully accessing or stewarding FTF monies.
- Develop relevant, culturally appropriate, and best-practice strategies for enhancing capacities within and among these agencies.
- Increase the number of nonprofits with capacity to apply for and successfully execute FTF grants.

Phase 2, the implementation phase, was awarded to the Alliance in July 2013. The Alliance has created a targeted and strategic approach designed to help early childhood serving agencies:

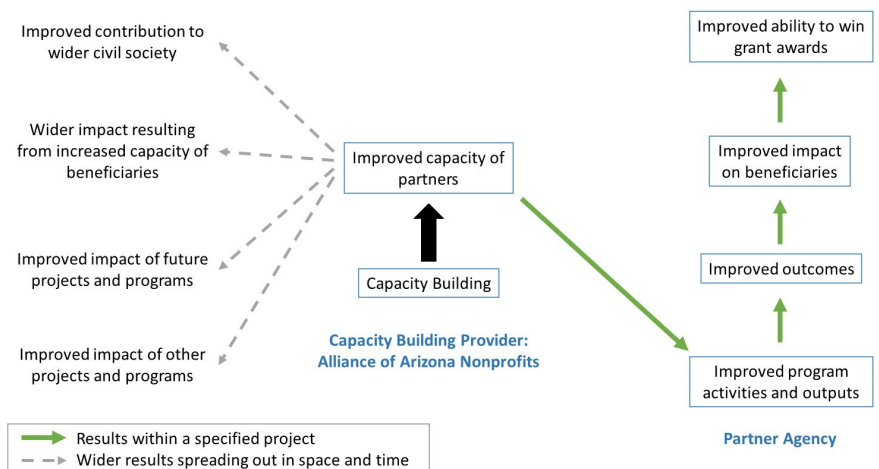
- Increase their understanding of the mission and goals of FTF, its contractual requirements, and its local governance structure.
- Explore the potential pathways for participating in the FTF system and determine where they aspire to 'fit in'.
- Identify and increase the capacities necessary for successful partnership with FTF and/or other major funders.

The approach consists of three major phases for the first contract 2013 – 2014 year of implementation:

JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
Phase A: Development and Recruitment					Phase B: Enrollment and Assessment			Phase C: Technical Assistance Design and Delivery			

Theory of Change:

This strategic capacity building initiative is grounded in the premise that an organization's ability to successfully win grant awards is in direct proportion to its demonstrated effectiveness. Also, that grant monies received from one funder increases the probability of receiving other grant awards, thereby further increasing capacity and leveraging public private dollars, as illustrated by the diagram.



For more information, please contact:

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